

system manager then updates the ordering database (1) on the basis of the received record (step 60). The system manager sends to the office system that record which, of records in the ordering database (1), has not been sent yet and contains the date of shipment (step S61) . On the office side, the date of acceptance is entered into the received record (step S62) and that record is then sent to the system manager.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please CANCEL claims 1-11.

Please ADD the following claims:

12. An electronic transaction system for making a request, which is one of an estimate request and an order request, for an article or service required by an organization to a vendor outside the organization comprising:

a processing unit installed inside the organization and having input means for inputting a request in order to exhibit the request to a plurality of vendors outside of the organization and inputting information related to the request on the basis of information sent from the vendor after the request has been made, the information related to the request being generated and exhibited to the vendor after examining whether the information sent from the vendor meets requirements of the organization for purchasing articles or services which the vendor supplies; and

a management unit for managing communications between the processing unit in the organization and a processing unit in the vendor company, the management unit including:

information entry means installed inside the organization for entering data input by the input means of the processing unit in the organization;

transmission means for transmitting the request entered into the information entry means installed in the organization and request-related data input later as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company; and

entry means installed outside the organization for transmitting data used by the vendor to

make a reply to the request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and sent by the processing unit in the vendor company.

13. The electronic transaction system according to claim 12, wherein if, when an order request for an article or service is sent to the vendor, and an estimate reply has not been obtained from the vendor, a request to estimate the article or service is made to the vendor before the order request is sent and the order request is then sent after a reply to the estimate request has been received.

14. The electronic transaction system according to claim 13, wherein, when replies to the estimate request are obtained from two or more vendors, the order request is automatically made to a vendor that fulfills predetermined evaluation criteria.

15. The electronic transaction system according to claim 12, wherein when the vendor accepts the order request, the management unit allows the processing unit installed in the vendor company to print a statement of delivery.

16. An electronic transaction system for making a request, which is one of an estimate request and an order request, for ordering articles or services required by an organization to vendors outside the organization comprising:

first processing units installed in department offices of the organization for inputting the request and a second processing unit installed inside the organization for managing the request made by the first processing units, wherein

the second processing unit including management means for managing dates of delivery of articles or services input from processing units installed in the vendor companies and acceptance processing means for determining, for each first processing unit that makes a new request, the presence or absence of order requests made by that first processing unit for which acceptance inspection of an article or service delivered has not been made within a predetermined period of time after its date of delivery and refusing the new request when the acceptance inspection has not been made.

17. An electronic transaction management unit for managing communications between a processing unit installed inside an organization for making a request, which is one of an estimate request and an order request, for an article or service and a processing unit installed in a vendor company outside the organization comprising:

information entry means installed inside the organization for entering data input by the input means of the processing unit in the organization;

transmission means for transmitting the request entered into the information entry means installed in the organization and request-related data input later as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company; and

entry means installed outside the organization for transmitting data used by the vendor to make a reply to the estimate or order request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and sent by the processing unit in the vendor company.

18. The electronic transaction management unit according to claim 17, wherein the management unit manages communications made by a plurality of organizations in relation to the request .

19. A computer-readable storage medium for allowing a computer to performs the functions of:

managing estimate requests or order requests made by first processing units installed in a plurality of departments in an organization;

managing dates of delivery of articles or services input by processing units installed in vendor companies outside the organization in response to order requests made by the first processing units; and

for a first processing unit that makes a new request, which is one of an estimate request and an order request, deciding the presence or absence of an order request for which acceptance inspection of an article or service delivered has not been made within a predetermined period of time after its date of delivery and refusing acceptance of the new request when the acceptance inspection has not yet been made.

20. A computer-readable storage medium for allowing a computer to perform the

functions of:

- entering data input by input means of a processing unit installed inside an organization;
- transmitting a request which is one of an estimate or order request entered and data related to the request input later as requested by a processing unit installed in a vendor company outside the organization; and

- transmitting data used by the vendor to make a reply to the request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and transmitted by the processing unit in the vendor company.

21. An electronic transaction system for making a request, which is one of an estimate request and order request, for an article or service required by an organization, comprising:

- a processing unit inputting the request ;
- a communication unit communicating the request to a plurality of vendors;
- an information management unit receiving information from the vendors related to the request; and
- an order processing unit inputting an order in response to the received information.

22. A method for fulfilling a request for a bid, comprising:

- entering a request for a bid to acquire an article or service;
- accessing the request by at least one supplier across a network; and
- transmitting a response to the request across the network from the at least one supplier.

23. The method for fulfilling a request according to claim 22, further comprising entering an order for the article or service based on the response.

24. A method for implementing a business to business electronic marketplace, comprising:

- soliciting estimates for fulfilling a requirement of the first business, by sending an

estimate request from the first business to a Value Added Network (VAN), where the VAN is accessible at least by the first business and a second business;

posting the estimate request on the VAN;

accessing, by a plurality of businesses, the posted estimate request;

estimating, by a second business within the plurality of businesses, the conditions by which the second business is willing to fulfill the requirement corresponding to the posted and accessed estimate request;

submitting the estimated conditions to the VAN; and

notifying the first business, via the VAN, that the second business has submitted the estimated conditions.

25. The method recited in claim 24, wherein said soliciting, posting, accessing, estimating, submitting, and notifying are responsive to the first business generating an order request.

26. The method recited in claim 25, further comprising:

placing, on the VAN, the order request, pursuant to the conditions that were estimated, submitted, and notified, said placing responsive to the first business generating the order request.

27. The method recited in claim 26, further comprising:

making, within an office of the first business, an internal request which is one of an internal estimate request and an internal order request, the internal request corresponding to the requirement of the first business; and

presenting the made internal request to a service center within the first business;

evaluating for approval the presented request, at the service center, responsive to said presenting, and before said soliciting; and

wherein said soliciting further comprises soliciting in response said evaluating.

28. A method for procuring, over a network, from within an organization, a vendor's goods and services, comprising:

requisitioning, within a first division of the organization, goods or services;  
approving, within a second division of the organization, the requisition;  
generating and sending to the vendor a purchase order corresponding to the approved requisition;

delivering, from the vendor to the first division, the ordered goods or services;  
receiving and accepting, at the first division, the delivered goods or services;  
notifying the second division that said receiving and accepting has occurred; and  
paying-out, at the second division, for the delivered goods or services.

29. A computer-readable storage medium for allowing a computer to perform the functions of:

entering data input by input means of a processing unit installed inside an organization;  
transmitting an order request entered and data related to the order request input later as requested by a processing unit installed in a vendor company outside the organization; and  
transmitting data used by the vendor to make a reply to the order request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and transmitted by the processing unit in the vendor company.

30. An electronic transaction system for ordering an article or service required by an organization, comprising:

a processing unit inputting a request for an order;  
a communication unit communicating the order request to a plurality of vendors;  
an information management unit receiving information from the vendors related to the order request; and  
an order processing unit inputting an order in response to the received information.